

# New mural excites Mauldin officials



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(Photo: HEIDI HEILBRUNN/Staff)

As impressed as George McLeer first was with Celine Crum when she had the guts to ask if she could paint a mural on an exterior wall of the Mauldin Cultural Center, the administrator for the Office of Cultural Affairs was just as impressed with her efforts to get the job done.

Crum, a Mauldin High senior who also attends the Fine Arts Center, and volunteers she rounded up spent Dec. 5 painting the wall facing Murray Drive.

“I think it went really well. Celine was there for a little over eight hours on Saturday,” McLeer said. “It looks even better in real life than it did in concept form.”

“We’re very excited about it.”

Crum said she thought the community service project, which she completed as a member of Furman University's Emerging Public Leaders program, was a success. Her day got off to a bit of a nervous start though.

"The only hiccup I came across was that most of the first wave of high school volunteers didn't show up," Crum said. "This worried me, but thankfully my parents and others stepped in to help even though they didn't plan on painting. The second wave of volunteers came and worked very quickly, and we finished right on time."

Over Thanksgiving weekend, Crum and her family came to the Cultural Center to prime the wall. Crum then outlined the design so that on painting day the following Saturday, all Crum and her crew needed to do was paint in the outlined areas.

Mauldin Mayor Dennis Raines said Crum and her crew "did an outstanding job." Raines added that in addition to the beautiful addition to Mauldin, he's always happy to see young people make the city a better place.

"It's always great to get our high school kids involved because they are the future of our city," Raines said. "For Celine to take the initiative to do that and to get a lot of her friends involved was fabulous."

Mauldin City Councilman Taft Matney echoed Raines' sentiments.

"I'm just extremely appreciative of somebody who would want to stand in front of a group of people at her age and say 'I'm ready to help make my community better,'" Matney said. "And she did it."

Crum's piece was inspired by Vincent Van Gogh's famous piece, "The Starry Night," McLeer said having a mural based on a historic piece of art painted on a historic building dedicated to the arts is a nice quality to have.

"It helps introduce that may not be aware of "Starry Night," and then when they see it later on can recognize its impact," McLeer said. "And if you are familiar with "Starry Night," you're probably going to be drawn into this one as well."

While painting the mural on the day of Mauldin's Christmas Parade wasn't planned, it did help bring exposure to Crum's efforts. The parade route ended at the Cultural Center in plain view of Crum and her crew painting.

"We had a lot of good feedback. After marching (in the parade), some of the (Mauldin) high school band members stopped by and took pictures with the people painting," McLeer said. "There was a lot of good buzz there."

Crum said she was very happy with how the mural turned out. She believes it successfully held her vision of bringing young people together to build something larger than themselves.

"It looks better than I expected because of all the hard-working volunteers," Crum said. "It's a great feeling to know that I have left a mark on Mauldin, and it is a memory that I will always hold close."

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